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resistance to the forward march of Progress in the agricultural field. No spontaneous wish for any branch of Progress except the political seems to have gripped the collective Luo mind. Here, on these hot and apathetic lakeland flats, all the impetus has come from Europeans.

It might be argued that the Government has no call to make people change their ways against their will. This indeed is an argument much used by Luo politicians. It is an old story: should nanny sit by and watch Master Robert break up his toys—in this case, ruin the soil, create acute erosion, turn the whole of Nyanza province, which contains one-third of Kenya's population, into a great rural slum?

Beyond question, that was going on. In Nyanza province there are over two million cattle, about one to every two acres. It would be a job to support this rate of stocking on the finest pastures under skilled management; here it is utterly impossible. The cattle have become so small and shrivelled that they are really not much larger than Great Danes, but their sharp hoofs can still make and deepen gullies as they track a way to springs. During the last three years, the output of crops in the province has halved, because yields have dropped so sharply. Yet there are more and more mouths to feed.

All the evils of land abuse were here displayed in concentrated form. No manure, no rotations, no resting land under grass; maize or cotton again and again, planted too late and in the wrong manner; no trees, communal grazing destroyed by useless skinny little beasts. It was not for want of trying by the technical staff. For years they had been urging, persuading, bullying, demonstrating, and they had scarcely dented Luo indifference and complacency. Famine was beginning to threaten these overcrowded areas—for the one thing the people continued to produce more and more of was their own kind.

II

And so the Government decided that the only salvation for the Luo lay in dividing their communally owned land into individual holdings. Land consolidation—the first stage

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question of bribery and corruption crops up everywhere and all concerned on the official side recognize it as their deepest enemy. But when I put Mr. Ayua's points to them they were a little sceptical. 'Of course there is bribery,' they said, 'but it is not as bad as that. And it is not the people who oppose land reforms, it is the politicians.' Mr. Ayua had just sent a telegram to the Governor asking for the removal of the 'reactionary D.C.' in Kisumu, so relations were naturally a bit strained.

VI

On the way to Maseno we had passed the unrealistic new hill between District Council and Government: the Kisiani hills, a barren, rocky bluff entirely denuded of vegetation and a scene of the most gruesome erosion, given over to goats browsing on boulders and any indomitable weed that had managed to germinate. This place had been leased by the District Council to the Government for the purpose of afforestation and about 800 acres of trees had been planted at a cost of £13,000.

Afforestation is unpopular. Goats were allowed to destroy the Kisiani seedlings and, when the forest department put up fences, people came and tore them down in the night. Others started to cultivate in defiance not only of the terms of the lease, but of regulations which forbid cultivation on steep hillsides. All this, in the official view, was part of a deliberate political campaign to stir up anti-Government feeling.

The Kisiani quarrel brought to a head bad feeling between the Central Nyanza District Council and the Government. All the Councillors are African save for the chairman, who is the D.C. Most of its senior technical staff are European and, in particular, it employs (as do all District Councils with large revenues) a fully qualified accountant to manage its finances.

These elected Councillors most anxious for unrestricted freedom objected strongly to this accountant. Africans, they said, should have the spending of African money without European interference. Officials retorted that in proper,

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honest accounting lies the only defence against wholesale bribery and corruption—against the sort of thing Mr. Ayan had complained about so powerfully. 311 648 668

In the midst of this controversy the Council, with its elected majority, repudiated the lease of the Kisiani afforestation area and refused to take steps to stop sabotage of the plantations. The Government retorted by demanding repayment of the £13,000 spent upon them. This would have meant raising the Council's annual rate from eighteen to twenty-one shillings on each adult male. 177

This demand to increase the rate was, of course, turned down flat by the elected Councillors, who in their anger sacked the accountant, appointed a totally unqualified African at £1,000 a year to succeed him, and threatened to dismiss other European staff on grounds of race. They also voted large increases in their own salaries and allowances. [186]

Naturally I asked Mr. Ayan's views. The Kisiani trouble, in his account, boiled down to a number of misunderstandings. The individuals who owned cultivation rights in the hills had not, he said, ever fully understood the matter, it had not been properly explained. They thought the trees would be theirs, not common property. They had never given their permission on paper, with marks or signatures. The matter was explained to them by an unpopular chief who did not wait to hear all their objections. When they grazed their goats in the plantations they thought they were on their own property and were much aggrieved when they were fined. They had no land elsewhere. Land hunger was so acute as to be a more important matter even than marriage. 'If a man should lose his wife he can buy another; but once the land is gone you cannot buy any more.' 311 177 648

It looked like one more failure in public relations. But the officials denied this. 'We explained over and over again,' they said. 'Barazas, news-sheets, radio . . . Everyone had a chance to put his case. No, behind it is the old story—politicians spreading rumours that it's all a trick to steal the land.' [668]

[pp. 110-151 not processed]